

Reflection on Basic Art Education

Yanqing Hou

Feixian School, Linyi University, Feixian, Shandong, 273400, P.R. China
lydxmfl@126.com

Abstract - A great number of people regard art as a sort of practical skill rather than academic discipline, which exerts great influence on art education. This paper tries to explore issues concerning basic art education from the perspective of the nature of art education and the new curriculum standard.

Index Terms - art education, mass aesthetic education, experiential learning

1. Introduction

Due to the distinctive nature of art education, art education has the goals of producing professional art talents and achieving mass aesthetic education, which are hard to balance. For many people, including some art educators, art, to a great extent, is a kind of skill rather than an academic discipline. However, the author holds that producers of art works are not only people with professional art skills, but also people with comprehensive art quality and culture.

Art education refers to a kind of social behaviour in which educators, through art teaching means, enables educatee to develop comprehensive knowledge and creative ability of art.[1,2]. However, the result of art education varies from one person to another. Some become artists through art education and personal efforts.

In most people's minds, the goal of art educators is to cultivate producers of art works or professional artists. Some educators for basic art even turn their art classes into monotonous training of art skills. In this case, students who are obsessed with painting and pottery-making in childhood turn to be fed up with the tedious art classes. Obviously, the goal of art education is not to cultivate every student into artists or creators of art works.

2. The Impact of the Nature of Education in Traditional Teaching on Basic Art Education

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, it is the book, *Pedagogy*, edited by Kailov, a Soviet educator that exerts great influence on Chinese educational circle. In this book, Kailov put forward three centrism, namely, teacher-centrism, textbook-centrism and classroom teaching-centrism. He also pointed out the five phrases of teaching. Besides, he stated the basic philosophical standpoint of the idea that teaching is a special epistemology, and concluded the six principles of teaching, such as implementing consciousness and enthusiasm of students in teaching, combining theory and practice, being intuitive, systematic and consistent, as well as easy to consolidate and acquire. Also, he included nine teaching methods centered by expository method in his book. In this case, the educational theory inevitably has profound impact on art education.

According to Herbert Read, a British art critic, certain instinctive qualities matters a lot for artists and only children with such qualities can become artists. The question is what kind of education can make a successful artist. Art educators should stimulate the potential of students, motivate them to actively feel, experience and create beauty from beautiful life, and encourage them to accumulate knowledge and experience with unique art thinking. Thus, students can acquire the qualities needed for art creation based on their experience of the external world. However, it is worth mentioning that in face of one art works, the appreciation level varies from one person to another. As individuals in the society, people need to receive certain art education, which is one issue relating to mass aesthetic education.[3].

The author thinks that the consumers of art works need to learn some art concepts, art theories and art appreciation education, which are all the teaching contents that not only the professional art education but also the non-professional art education should emphasize and focus on. Therefore, it becomes an important task for art education to enable students to develop competence to enjoy the beauty of arts through effective training.

3. New Art Curriculum Standard Providing a Broad Experiential Learning Platform for Students

In the current curriculum reform of basic education, the new curriculum system has made great breakthroughs in curriculum function, structure and content, compared to the former system. The new art curriculum standard breaks the original knowledge framework of art teaching and divides art curriculum into four learning aspects, including appreciation and commentary, model and performance, design and application, as well as integration and exploration, according to different learning style and from a new perspective.

The two fields, namely, model and performance as well as design and application, pay attention to the free ideas of students and encourage students to make bold and creative designs and express their ideas and feelings. The appreciation and commentary field focuses on art taste and qualities. As for the integration and exploration field, it emphasizes experiential learning through comprehensive art activities, guides students to actively explore, research and create, encourages students to use comprehensive knowledge and skills to produce, reflect and display their affective experience, as well as stimulate students' desire to explore unknown fields and experience happiness and sense of achievement.

The new curriculum standard inserts a number of experiential learning methods into the teaching materials. The

teaching methods shift from the passive acceptance to explorative learning as well as independent and cooperative learning. The new curriculum content also reflects experiential learning of individuals from various perspectives, thus providing a broader experiential learning platform for students.

Firstly, experiential learning gives more focus to the interaction between the subject and the object.

The process of learning is a process of the interaction between the subject and object. In the teaching process, students, as the subject of learning, are independent, active and creative. In contrast, the teaching materials are fixed, static and passive, which impose obstacles and difficulties on students. In this case, conflict seems to arise between students and teaching materials. In order to conduct experiential learning, teachers should play the role of making the objective, passive and uniform teaching materials alive. In other words, teachers should apply the mechanism and means of experiential learning and turn teaching materials into open, interesting and lively learning activities, based on the physiological and psychological characteristics of students as well as the function and content of textbooks.

Taking the teaching process of *Human Body Proportion* for example, teachers should give students opportunities to observe each other so as to experience the features and beauty of human body. The observation of human body can enrich their understanding of dynamic postures of human. The practice of sketching the human body can enable students to experience the structural features of human body as well as the harmonious and dynamic beauty of human body. Besides, students can gain happiness from experiential learning. Moreover, experiential learning situation and atmosphere can be created so that students can develop great interest in cognitive activities, autonomously participate into learning activities, and actively explore knowledge and insert the knowledge into their affective experience.

Secondly, experiential learning gives more focus to the practicalness of the learning subject.

New curriculum reform attaches great importance to the subject status of students. Experiential learning is an effective teaching method which well manifests this guideline.[2]. The author thinks that experiential learning is to let students feel and form knowledge on object through senses through rich and interesting practical activities. Through practical activities, students realize that objective things are the source of art works. Experiential learning is the process of mobilizing cognitive and affective experience on the basis of sensual experience, gradually gaining cognitive knowledge, then testing the sensual experience and correcting and elevating cognitive knowledge through practical creation activities, and finally gaining the happiness of the creation of art works.

Thirdly, experiential learning gives more focus to the flexibility of the teaching materials.

In art teaching, there are various approaches to implement experiential learning. Such approaches include taking the characteristic of students' age and their learning

needs into consideration in the selection of teaching materials, choosing appropriate teaching method and entry point, creating proper learning situation, and enabling students to acquire cognitive knowledge in harmonious learning activities. Besides, the various experiential learning approaches are independent and interrelated.[4]. The learning process itself is the process in which the subject utilizes visual sense, auditory sense and tactile sense to perceive with the brain.

4. Art Education Being the Combination of Skill and Scholarship

Since art education is not constrained by the entrance exam system of the exam-orientated education, art teaching can be the sally port to create art education atmosphere featuring the combination of regularity and intentionality. Basic art education should fulfill the tasks of syllabus as well as achieve the goal of discovering and cultivating students. As part of quality education, basic art education should not only be comprehensive and basic, but also be adaptable, realistic and advanced. Therefore, art classes of basic art education should aim at cultivating students' initial ability to feel beauty, appreciate beauty and express beauty.[5]. Besides, these classes should also base themselves on the syllabus, meet various needs of students, as well as involve different ability evaluation standard and teaching methods, thus elevating the height of quality education.

Art education not only aims to discover and cultivate art talents, but also undertakes the goal of achieving mass aesthetic education. For the cultivation of art talents. For students who want to be professional artists, teachers should give more focus to the cultivation of their art skills in line with theoretical knowledge. For students who want to receive mass art aesthetic education, teachers should impart more theoretical knowledge such as art common sense, art appreciation and art theories. It can be seen that the former education focuses more on skill learning while the latter focuses more on academic learning. However, the basic art education should be the combination of skill learning and academic learning. Besides, it is without doubt that basic art education should be achieved in line with the education of literature, history and philosophy.

In traditional teaching, influenced by exam-oriented education, mass aesthetic education is regarded unimportant. With the development of quality education and the deepening of new curriculum reform, art education has won a place. However, every art educator should keep in mind that their task is not to enable every student to paint or carve, but to enable them to feel art works and develop art qualities through activities like painting and carving. Art is the combination of scholarship and skill. Like wise, art education is also the combination of scholarship and skill.

5. Summary

Art education should cultivate not only the producers of art works who are equipped with comprehensive art quality and culture, but also consumers of art works.

References

- [1] D.g. Wang, art teaching theory, East China Normal University press, Shanghai, China, 2000. (In Chinese)
- [2] Q.Chen, R.d Liu, contemporary educational psychology, Beijing Normal University press, Beijing, China, 1997. (In Chinese)
- [3] R.zh. Shao, educational psychology, Shanghai Education Press, Shanghai, China, 1990. (In Chinese)
- [4] L.Ye, Principles of Education, East China Normal University press, Shanghai, China, 1993. (In Chinese)
- [5] The Education Department of the Ministry of education of Fine Arts Curriculum Development Group, The fine arts curriculum standards, Peking University press, Beijing, China, 2002. (In Chinese)